

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, MILI, PGOV, BM

SUBJ: GUILTY VERDICTS HANDED DOWN IN THE COUP PLOT TRIAL

SUMMARY

ALL SIX DEFENDANTS IN THE BURMESE COUP PLOT TRIAL WERE FOUND GUILTY IN VERDICTS ANNOUNCED BY THE RANGOON DIVISION COURT ON JANUARY 11. THE ALLEGED RINGLEADER, CAPT. OHN KYAW MYINT, WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH, AND EX-GENERAL TIN OO RECEIVED 7 YEARS IMPRISONMENT. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE COURTROOM MADE VERBAL PROTESTS AFTER OHN KYAW MYINT'S VERDICT WAS READ, AND SECURITY WAS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY HEIGHTENED AT RANGOON UNIVERSITY. THE GENERAL PUBLIC DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE UNDULY SURPRISED AT THE HARSH SENTENCES METED OUT, AND EXPECTS THE SENTENCES ULTIMATELY TO BE REDUCED. END SUMMARY.

1. NOTING THAT THE ACCUSED ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY THE PARTY AND STATE STRUCTURE "ADOPTED OVERWHELMINGLY BY THE PEOPLE" AND THAT THE PLOTTERS HAD STRAINED THE HONOR OF THE TATMADAW (BURMESE ARMY) "WHICH HAS ALWAYS WORKED IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE," THE RANGOON DIVISION COURT ON JANUARY 11 DELIVERED ITS VERDICTS IN THE HIGH TREASON TRIAL. MORE THAN 300 PEOPLE CROWDED INTO THE INSEIN COURTROOM TO
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HEAR THE DECISIONS. ALL THE ACCUSED WERE FOUND GUILTY, AND HEAVY "DETERRENT" SENTENCES WERE METED OUT TO MOST OF THE DEFENDANTS. CAPT. OHN KYAW MYINT, THE ALLEGED RINGLEADER, WAS FOUND GUILTY OF HIGH TREASON AND WAS SENTENCED TO BE HANGED. HE ALSO RECEIVED 14 YEARS FOR "ORGANIZING, AGITATING, AND CONSPIRING TO DESTROY THE BSPP" UNDER THE 1975 LAW SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRY'S

LEADING PARTY. CAPT. WIN THEIN RECEIVED LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND 10 YEARS, RESPECTIVELY, FOR THE SAME TWO OFFENSES, SENTENCES TO BE SERVED CONCURRENTLY. COL. HLA PE WAS SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS FOR ENCOURAGING PERSONS GUILTY OF HIGH TREASON, AND 10 YEARS UNDER THE LAW PROTECTING THE PARTY, SENTENCES TO BE SERVED CONCURRENTLY. THE COURT GAVE MAJ. SEIN MYINT AND CAPT. BA CHIT 5 YEARS FOR ENCOURAGING HIGH TREASON, NOTING THAT THEY HAD REPENTED AND CONFESSED THEIR GUILT. EX-GENERAL TIN OO WAS FOUND TO HAVE FAILED TO REPORT THE PLOT TO THE AUTHORITIES AND WAS SENTENCED TO 7 YEARS FOR MISPRISON OF HIGH TREASON.

2. COUNSEL FOR ALL SIX DEFENDANTS INDICATED THEY WILL APPEAL THE DECISIONS.

3. ACCORDING TO USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEE WHO WAS PRESENT IN THE COURTROOM, THE DECISION RAN TO 160 PAGES AND TOOK HOURS TO READ. WHEN OHN KYAW MYINT'S SENTENCE WAS ANNOUNCED THERE WERE SHOUTS IN BURMESE OF "KANGAROO COURT," "THIS IS NOT JUSTICE," AND "NO, NO, NO" FROM THE RANKS OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ATTENDANCE. GUB SECURITY MEN, WHO HAVE BEEN MUCH IN EVIDENCE IN THE COURTROOM THROUGHOUT THE TRIAL, DID NOTHING, ALTHOUGH SHORTLY AFTER THE TRIAL AND THE FOLLOWING DAY ADDITIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL WERE NOTICED AT RANGOON UNIVERSITY AND IN THE VICINITY OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES DOWNTOWN. WHEN TIN OO'S SENTENCE WAS ANNOUNCED, HIS SON AND FATHER BURST OUT CRYING.

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4. AFTER OHN KYAW MYINT'S SENTENCE WAS READ SEVERAL PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE QUESTIONED AMONG THEMSELVES THE PURPOSE OF THE ADDITIONAL 14 YEARS METED OUT TO HIM. THEY WERE REMINDED BY THOSE AROUND THEM THAT THIS IS FURTHER PUNISHMENT FOR HIS SPIRIT. THIS IS SAID TO ACCORD WITH THE TRADITIONAL BURMESE PRACTICE OF BURYING CRIMINALS IN CITY GATES WITH A SENTENCE TO GUARD THE CITY FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD.

5. INITIAL REPORTS INDICATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC ANTICIPATED THE RESULT AT THE TRIAL WOULD GO AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS. SOME BURMESE SEE THE SENTENCES AS EXTREMELY HARSH AND ILL-ADVISED, HOWEVER, AND OTHERS SAY THAT THIS WAS A SHAM TRIAL WHICH PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL SAN YU STAGED TO GET RID OF HIS CHIEF RIVAL GENERAL TIN OO. MOST OBSERVERS HERE EXPECT THE SENTENCES TO BE REACHED, EITHER ON APPEAL OR AS AN ACT OF PRESIDENTIAL CLEMENCY. OSBORN

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